DANCE AS INQUIRY: CRITICAL THINKING IN DANCE EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Dance
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

June 2010

"Dance as Inquiry: Critical Thinking in Dance Education," a thesis prepared by Ann Thomas Moffett in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in the Department of Dance. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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June 1, 2010
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An Abstract of the Thesis of

Ann-Thomas Moffett for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

in the Department of Dance to be taken June 2010

Title: DANCE AS INQUIRY: CRITICAL THINKING IN DANCE EDUCATION

Approved: _____
Dr. Jenifer Craig

My research identifies critical thinking as an essential component of dance training for students of all ages and abilities, particularly students K-12. This project strategizes ways in which the studio dance teacher can create opportunities for critical thinking in the classroom and reveals ways in which learning dance can enhance critical thinking. Special consideration is placed on how critical thinking, as a skill, relates to the unique curiosities and objectives of the discipline. Within the qualitative and experiential research design, theoretical questions are proposed and practical pedagogical applications are developed. Insights from interviews with experts in the field of dance education are interwoven with practical applications from teaching two summer dance programs for distinct youth populations, a college-preparatory program for "talented and gifted" students and an open class for homeless youth living in ShelterCare housing communities.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to my mentor and committee chair Dr. Jenifer Craig for her invaluable guidance, encouragement, and editing, as well as to committee members Rita Honka and Walter Kennedy for their significant insights and support. Many thanks are due to the Dance Department faculty, who each taught me something unique about our craft. I also thank my generous sisters Marcie and Alex, who have made this journey truly rich. Special thanks are due to my family, especially my husband, Ryan without whom I know for certain I could not have done this work. His diligent patience and love provided perspective and home.

This work is dedication to my Mother, who continues to teach me the importance of education and the value of continuous learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My research focuses on ways dance teachers can invite students into advanced levels of conceptual engagement in dance and the unique ways dance, with its relationship to movement, allows for a full-bodied, robust version of critical thinking. The studio is a place where people get smarter by learning via the moving body. This process wherein, "the world inside- the integrated world of sensation, feeling, mind, and spirit" (Evans 1999, 47) is in direct relation to artistic expression and technical skill, creates an opportunity for a rich and multi-faceted body of knowledge in dance.

After attending Anne Green Gilbert's Brain-Compatible Dance Education Teacher Training in summer 2008, I became interested in her ideas on how to teach dance utilizing a conceptual approach, with the goal to engage students on physical, emotional, and intellectual levels. This training, in partnership with working as a graduate teaching fellow in the Dance Department at the University of Oregon, led me to design a study centered on uncovering best practices in dance pedagogy.

Within the research, I observed and interviewed experts in the field of dance education at a Dance Teachers Intensive held at Cornish College of the Arts in

Seattle. Then I applied what I learned to design and teach two summer dance programs for distinct youth populations. Equal emphasis was placed on synthesizing underlying conceptual frameworks and practical pedagogical strategies.

This study identifies critical thinking as an essential component of dance training for students of all ages and abilities, particularly students enrolled in grades kindergarten through high school. My research strategizes ways in which the studio dance teacher can create opportunities for critical thinking in the classroom and reveals ways in which learning dance can enhance critical thinking. Equally important is identifying how critical thinking, as a skill, relates to the unique curiosities and objectives of the dance discipline.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to develop practical pedagogical answers to three theoretical questions, which emerged from a survey of literature from the fields of dance, education, and the philosophical canons of feminism and phenomenology focused on lived-body experience. Significantly, an additional purpose was to investigate how these three questions can be best understood in the context of critical thinking. The three questions are:

1. How does dance pedagogy allow students to engage with the functions and processes of their bodies?

2. Does dance pedagogy allow students to experience abstract concepts through physical action? If so, how? If not, why?
3. How does dance pedagogy allow students to draw connections from the classroom to other areas in their lives?

Orientation to Study

While I did not focus on critical thinking in my preliminary research, nor heard it explicitly emphasized at the Cornish Dance Teachers Intensive, I identify it as an underlying thread that connected all of the components of my study. During the design phase of the research, I felt the three questions were distinct, yet suggestive of a heightened expectation of rigor. Subsequently, after talking with the experts and working with two youth populations, I saw the three questions as entry points for dance educators to develop dance-specific critical thinking. In my experience as a dance student, I was not aware of critical thinking as a standard component of the traditional dance class structure. While I firmly believe that my education in dance utilized critical thinking, among other forms of engagement, the language was not openly applied in dance pedagogy vocabulary. The first time during this research process that I was confronted with the term critical thinking, (more specifically higher order thinking) was while I was teaching at the University of Oregon College of Education's Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), a college-preparatory program for youth ages eleven to sixteen.

When it came time to discuss instructor evaluations of students, our supervisor informed those of us teaching art classes that we would use an adapted form since we didn't do as much higher-order thinking as other subjects (Supervisor, SEP staff meeting, July 14, 2009). For students in my three courses, Contemporary Dance Technique: Ballet, Jazz, and Modern Dance, Improvisation and Composition, and Dance on Film: Focus on the Artist, the following prompts were omitted and I was not asked to assess them:

1. The student displays higher order thinking skills and is able to synthesize, evaluate, and analyze problems, statements, solutions, and concepts.
2. The student is able to solve complex problems. S/he applies a wide variety of strategies with accuracy and thoroughness to find a resolution of a problem or issue.

These two questions were replaced with the following on my form.

3. The student demonstrates creative ability by completing tasks that achieve their purposes while reflecting insightful individuality.

At this point in the research, I had participated in the Cornish Dance Teachers Intensive and interviewed master teachers, Bill Evans, Kitty Daniels, and Don Halquist regarding their values, beliefs and practices in dance pedagogy as they related to my preliminary research questions. I was inspired by their commitment to constantly refine their own best practices in dance pedagogy in order to engage

students on the multiple levels in which learning can occur in the studio dance class. As a result, I was full of ideas for my own classes, informed by their conceptual insights and teaching strategies. I tried very hard to craft the classes at SEP in a laboratory style, with performance opportunities embedded in the class experience, but that intentionally did not culminate in a performance for the camp talent show. Teaching toward a recital type of event did not square with this pedagogical plan. Interestingly enough, I had had to defend myself for making this choice during my interview for the job. My intention was to represent the range of experiences available within dance pedagogy, and to give students the opportunity to consider the artistic and scholarly rigor of the field. We danced, discussed, read, and/or wrote every day of every class.

However, there was clearly a hierarchy amongst course offerings, which until the distribution of evaluations, was unspoken, that placed dance in a separate and lower category of intellectual value than other courses such as Model United Nations, Chinese Military History, Harlem Renaissance, and The History of Video Games. Equally problematic was that the evaluations were allocated without consulting the art teachers regarding which of the evaluations was most appropriate for the course work. While I concede that there are instances where dance may be taught as rote mimicry, with little opportunity for advanced levels of engagement of criticality or creativity, I adamantly assert the same is true of any other class. While higher order thinking, also referred to as critical thinking, "although some

authors draw a distinction between the two terms" (Warburton 2004, 71), looks different within distinct contexts, I was surprised and frustrated by the assumption that class work in dance would not include this type of intellectual rigor.

A similar issue surfaced earlier during a group discussion about active learning in our teacher orientation. It is significant to note that for the orientation, active learning essentially meant finding ways to get students moving in class. Immediately, this narrow perception of active learning seemed quite off target for facilitating relevant movement opportunities that actually connected with the learning objectives. When discussing strategies for facilitating active learning, my supervisor said to me, that I didn't have to worry; my classes would be moving all the time (Supervisor, SEP Teacher Orientation, July 4, 2009). The implication was that because the dance courses were non-sedentary by nature and offered consistent opportunities for movement, active learning was of no concern. This comment was not only dismissive of the work I was planning but also by-passed the opportunity for me (with a movement background) to help other teachers brainstorm potential movement strategies to integrate into their curriculum. That active learning was identified as being important and at the same time having my work dismissed since I did it, as if it were an automatic thing, was a bizarre contradiction. Further, equating active learning with exercise and staying awake in class, completely misses the point that within any discipline, movement experiences in the classroom should be designed to connect to the subject matter. I had learned from the master

teachers at the Dance Teachers Intensive that active learning was highly complex, requiring students' active engagement and participation on multiple levels. Because students are dancing, i.e. moving, does not mean one can assume they are actively engaged.

I was in the midst of proposing what I knew to be rigorous questions for my field and ultimately myself and the students. And yet, in this context, the space for that level of inquiry in dance was not understood nor provided. The irony of being included in a college-prep program within a university where the College of Education has a national reputation and at the same time, having my work separated from the higher levels of inquiry felt simultaneously maddening and yet, ultimately encouraging for what was at stake in my research.

Assumptions

I assume the theoretical questions I am working with are relevant to consider for the dance educator and student within multiple age groups, populations, and contexts and that pedagogical practice can transfer amongst them. Further, this research is based on an assumption that teachers and students of dance technique have the potential to make profound meanings and identify values in their classes that extend beyond movement imitation, physical health, and the positive feelings associated with movement. Although the latter are also important benefits of our discipline, I assume they are not the primary objectives of our work.

As contemporary artists and educators, we are responsible for much deeper inquiries within our field. I use as a basis for this assumption my own reflections and understandings of the discipline as well as support from researchers and thinkers in the fields of dance and education, cited in my review.

Delimitations

In terms of practical applications, I delimited my teaching to two youth populations. These were the University of Oregon College of Education's 2009 Summer Enrichment Program, a college preparatory program for students age eleven to sixteen, and an open dance course for homeless youth living in housing communities of the non-profit organization ShelterCare in Eugene, Oregon. I recognize that my experiences might vary greatly if I were working with an adult population or with youth in other settings. Because the two programs differed in terms of student population, previous exposure to dance, and time allotted in the studio, the resultant curricula were different, as were the outcomes. But again, I assume that pedagogical theory and practice can transfer.

Limitations

During the two summer dance programs, I served as both teacher and researcher. It was a challenge to work inside of an experience and also study and report on it. However, this was an intentional decision that I believe reflects the

real challenge facing teachers: the challenge of conceiving, planning and implementing the details of a dance pedagogy that aligns with personal values and philosophies. This task also includes the reflective work that happens in the midst of teaching to adapt and adjust in order to meet the students where they are. The values and philosophies were gleaned from preliminary research, personal reflection, classroom experience and interviews with experts in the field.

Definitions

Abstract: In the second question for this study, does dance pedagogy allow students to experience abstract concepts through physical action, I use abstract to describe intangible concepts, which can be difficult to describe with words but are nevertheless perceived. They are things we know exist but that are elusive, with fluid interpretations depending on the individual experiencing them and the context in which they are experienced. An interesting expansion for this study was the notion of embodiment, or engaging the body in order to physically experience ideas, which are often referred to as existing in the mind. Examples include space and relationships.

Active Learning: It is important to clearly state that active learning requires more of dance students than movement. While this may seem obvious, at SEP I was confronted with the assumption that active learning simply meant that students

were moving, and therefore, I would not have to worry about active learning in my classes. I define active learning as taking responsibility for one's own growth and development within a given scenario. Active learning is context-specific, and in dance, it requires an inquisitive and rigorous engagement on physical, perceptual, sensual, and intellectual levels. This engagement necessitates a heightened awareness, presence, and cognition. One pedagogical example, which will be discussed further in Chapter IV, is asking students to practice dance thinking, which simultaneously requires perceiving and decision-making.

Critical Thinking: There are countless definitions for critical thinking and as with active learning, the meanings of critical thinking will vary amongst disciplines and contexts. Characteristics of critical thinking, as identified in the abridged edition of *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives,* may include but are not limited to applying, analyzing, understanding, evaluating and creating (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001, 269-70). Within traditional philosophical and educational methodologies, critical thinking may suggest an activity limited to the brain. Unfortunately, this perception dismisses the rest of the body from holding any import in the generation of knowledge. Therefore, a hierarchy is established, which compartmentalizes the person in an inaccurate way that is particularly problematic for dance educators. One example of critical thinking identified in this study is the play between internal

and external experience. In their courses at Cornish and in their interviews, Bill Evans and Kitty Daniels stated the necessity for dancers to "go inside" (June 28-July 2, 2009) in order to learn how to take on the given information and discover how it is relevant to them. I understand this play between internal experience and external cuing as well as learning from both a sensory and cognitive place to be prime examples of critical thinking in the studio dance class. This dance-specific form of cognition is achieved through an investigation of and through the full self, made possible when a person moves, thinking and sensing in tandem. Framed another way, dance thinking works like "applied intellection, as a link between feeling and action" (Martin 1939, 291).

Higher Order Thinking: "involves a cluster of elaborative mental activities requiring nuanced judgment and analysis of complex situations according to multiple criteria. Higher order thinking is effortful and depends on self-regulation. The path of action or correct answers are not fully specified in advance. The thinker's task is to construct meaning and impose structure on situations rather than to expect to find them already apparent" (Resnick 1987, 44).

Studio Dance Class: When interviewing Bill Evans at Cornish College of the Arts, he advised me that in discussing pedagogical theory and practices, the term "dance classes" was too broad, that "there are so many different ways in which people

approach dance" (Evans, July 1, 2009). Evans utilizes and advocates for a dance pedagogy committed to meaning making and contextualizing the work done in the classroom, one that invites students to engage with themselves, considering the living body as their teacher. I feel certain that "studio dance classes" would not suffice for Evans either but for the purposes of my research and in an effort to be succinct, I use the term to refer to studio classes where more than sixty percent of the total class time is spent learning via movement. Examples include Dance Technique, Composition, Improvisation, and others.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED WORKS

The review of literature is divided into two phases, one that preceded and one that followed the experiential components of the research methodology. A Review of Related Works, which separates the two phases of the Review of Literature reviews the Dance Teachers Institute, the master teachers involved in the course, and teaching opportunities available in Eugene, Oregon. This portion of the review laid the ground-work for the experiential components of the research. The intention is to reveal the interactions between textual analysis and the experiential praxis as each informs and is informed by the other.

Pre-Experiential Review: Design Phase

At the onset, the design phase started with textual analysis of writings from dance education, educational theory, and philosophy addressing lived body experience. This preliminary work yielded the three questions, which established the subtext for each component and the research as a whole.

Margaret H' Doubler (1889-1982) established the first dance major in the United States at the University of Wisconsin in 1926. Today her work continues to

strongly influence dance pedagogy within and outside of the university setting. In her book, *Dance: A Creative Art Experience*, first edition published in 1940, she examines the nature of dance and defines some of its aspects including rhythm, technique, and composition in order that dance may be viewed in terms of its possibilities and contributions to the individual, to the academy, and to society. She promotes dance as accessible to all (H'Doubler 1957, xix). In this book, H'Doubler discusses values indispensable to a technique class, the responsibilities of a dance educator, and the natural abilities and tools students bring to a dance classroom. Most significant for my research on critical thinking and the studio dance class is her recommendation, "Movement experiences need to be presented in such a way that the student will be able to summon and integrate his intellectual, emotional, and physical responses, and in this way be able to identify himself with his own movement experience" (H'Doubler 1957, xxxi). That H'Doubler calls for integration of the intellectual, emotional, and physical responses, reveals the complexity and multiple levels of learning and engagement she knew were available in dance education and would contribute to the student's overall education.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone was a student of H'Doubler at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In "On Learning to Move Oneself," an essay first written in 1981 and later published in *Margaret H'Doubler: The Legacy of America's Dance Education Pioneer,* she explains that discovery was a significant principle of

H'Doubler's pedagogy, writing, "discovery consistently plays a key role: exploration and experimentation are the rule rather than the exception and emphasis is clearly upon learning to move oneself" (Sheets-Johnstone 2006, 276). This passage suggests connectedness between the rigors of creative and critical engagement in the studio dance class. In her book *The Phenomenology of Dance*, Sheets-Johnstone warns that the values of dance should not be made to coincide with the goals of education. "To overlook the labor and vital engagement necessary to the creation of a dance, and to concentrate instead on effective group interaction, individual growth, self-realization . . . is actually to nullify the dance." One should not "embellish dance on the other end with predetermined values" (Sheets 1966, 144-145). The value, educational and otherwise, of learning and composing dance is intrinsic to those acts. For Sheets-Johnstone, front-loading the studio dance class experience with pre-determined, general educational objectives runs the risk of making dance something other than itself. This was significant as I grappled with critical thinking and dance. What serves what? Or does it work both ways? Dance offers unique opportunities for a robust and full-bodied form of critical thinking and at the same time, critical thinking as a skill, can complement dance training. A premise of this study was that, as Sheets-Johnstone wrote, "education should be a means to dance, a means whereby its uniqueness and vitality would be concretely illuminated" (Sheets 1966, 142). Within this narrow sampling of writings from H'Doubler and Sheets-Johnstone, it appears the two

women represent different philosophies for the role of dance in education and education in dance. However, it is essential to consider the context of H'Doubler's work and what she was trying to accomplish for dance within the university in comparison to the different vantage Sheets-Johnstone, and the next generation of dance scholars, had during the 1960s. A more complete exploration of the points of connection and distinction between the philosophies of these women, would require a much more thorough review of the full trajectory of their works on dance and education, considering the historical context within which they were written.

Elliot W. Eisner, a leading educational theorist in the U.S., is a retired Emeritus Professor of Art and Lee Jacks Professor of Education and Professor of Art at Stanford University where his work overlapped the fields of Arts Education, Curriculum Studies, and Qualitative Research Methodology. His research interests focused on the development of aesthetic intelligence and on the use of methods from the arts to study and improve educational practice. In his article in *Art Education,* "Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?" he echoes Sheets-Johnstone, opining that art should not be treated as means to educational ends (Eisner 1998, 38). This was an important word of caution to me. While it is important to articulate clearly about the domains of work within the field as well as my perception of points of intersection with other fields, I did not want to make the mistake of naively folding the imperatives of dance as an art form into the broader goals of education. Just because the arts continue to be

undervalued, I did not want to succumb to conceiving my study of dance as purely a conduit toward the "greater" goals of education. What appears to be more relevant is to consider current trends in education and how these might both complement and be enhanced by studying dance. In other words, I am interested in how becoming a clearer thinker, a more efficient learner, a more articulate speaker, a more directed question asker, can help me make better art, be a better artist, and ultimately help my students do the same. In Eisner's more recent book, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, he flips the paradigm, now illuminating how art can shape education. One major idea is that, "artistic activity is a form of inquiry that depends on qualitative forms of intelligence. . . . Learning to paint, to draw, to compose music, or to dance requires learning to think" (Eisner 2002, 232). Within this research, I have also investigated the kind of thinking that can occur in dance, a discipline engaging the body and movement.

Sylvie Fortin serves as a researcher at the *Universite' de Montreal* for the Sainte-Justine Research Center. Her research interests are classified as Social and Medical Anthropology. In a 1993 article in *Kinesiology and Medicine for Dance*, "When Dance Science and Somatics Enter the Dance Technique Classroom," she presents an in-depth single case study of dance teacher Glenna Batson in her Body Therapy course at the American Dance Festival. Fortin's objective was to investigate "how dance teachers think about the content of their classes but also how they actually teach" (Fortin 1993, 88-89). She presents four broad questions

and uses these throughout to guide the reader as she develops the narrative component of her article. The broad questions are broken down into sub-questions or categories. The goal of her research is for teachers to "reflect on their own practice," not to "generalize findings to other teachers" (Fortin 1993, 105-106). The most significant aspect of the research for this study is its clear design and organization of purpose questions and results, which are presented as emergent themes. Regarding the questions of this study, it was helpful to see how she transitioned her discussion from broad, value-based questions to practical applications in the classroom.

Susan Stinson is a dance educator committed to qualitative research that brings the voices of teachers and students into academic and professional discourse. In her 1984 dissertation, "Reflections and Visions: A Hermeneutic Study of Dancers and Possibilities in Dance Education," she searches for meaning in three areas: her personal life, her professional life as a dancer/dance educator, and herself as citizen of the world. *She* is the main text for which she is searching for understanding although she came to the journey by way of a search for the meaning of dance curriculum. She takes a hermeneutic approach to the research, utilizing a poetic methodology, whereby she examines herself and her work in the same way she approaches a work of art, in order to find meaning in her experience as a dance educator. In her chapters, Stinson moves from large questions relating to the world and human existence to specific scenarios common in dance education. As her

own subject of study, she reflects on existential questions as she comes to know them through observations of herself in these three areas as well as through readings from other curriculum theorists, sociologists, and scholars whose work deals with education. Her reflective observations fall under one of two categories: experiential or qualitative. They rely heavily on subjective experiences of dance. Her process of discussing the issues she encounters in her field and the resultant findings and interpretations are both cyclic and integrated into all three areas. Her methodology provided a model for synthesizing the dual roles of teacher and researcher within my research design.

Finding meaning from qualitative and experiential research is a theme that carries into Stinson's more recent scholarship. In her 1993 article in the *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, "Meaning and Value: Reflections on What Students Say About School," Stinson immersed herself in the culture of four high school dance classrooms and worked as a participant observer, taking class with the students, spending time with them outside of class, and interviewing them at the end of each semester. She wanted to learn what the students thought about school and how they attached (or failed to attach) meaning and value to their experiences in both dance class and the larger context of their school experience. She also worked closely with, and interviewed the teachers. She used a methodology of interpretive inquiry, or "humanities-based research where the search was for meaning . . . ," with an intent "to develop a language, or way of talking about a

subject" (Stinson 1993, 217). Her understanding of what the students wanted from the experience of school arose in the following themes: "to be stimulated, to learn; to have a sense of meaning in what they are being taught; to be treated with understanding – to be cared for; and to be able to be themselves. This involves conditions of both security . . . and freedom" (Stinson 1993, 235).

In Stinson's "Research as Choreography," originally presented to the National Dance Association in 1994 as the Scholar's Lecture and later published in *Research in Dance Education* in 2006, she draws parallels between research and choreography in an effort to demonstrate that the creativity used to construct a body of dance work is similar to that required to create a body of research. This connection easily extrapolates to the dance teacher as well and offers a subtext for ways teachers can approach crafting the studio dance class. Stinson clearly details the work of researchers like herself. "We pay attention to things, select from our observations those which appear to be significant, perceive relationships between/among them, think about what these might mean, and make something out of the whole process" (Stinson 2006, 202). She provides an example of how she used her kinesthetic sensibility and a reliance on physical sensation and spatial orientation to discover a way to create a framework for her dissertation (Stinson 2006, 205).

Edward Warburton is an associate professor in the Digital Arts and New Media Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He also serves as

associate editor of *Research in Dance Education.* According to his faculty page on the University of California Santa Cruz's Department of Theatre Arts website, his scholarly interests deal with "thinking through dance, examining the nature of dance cognition and creativity, teaching and learning." He has published several articles addressing dance and critical thinking. In his 2008 article, "Beyond Steps: The Need for Pedagogical Knowledge in Dance," he promotes pedagogical knowledge as equally important to content knowledge for dance teachers. He uses Stinson's "Research as Choreography" as a framework to advocate within the field of dance that pedagogy is a dancer's work, just as Stinson claims that research is a dancer's work (Warburton 2008, 11). He explicitly discusses critical thinking in dance education, advocating for its inclusion in training for advanced and beginning students. After engaging in an ongoing case study with expert dance educators, he reports,

> Expert dance educators appear to believe in critical-thinking activities for all learners, and they hold high expectations for everyone, including themselves. Instead of 'talent will out' instructional tendencies, these experts believe 'achievement will out' regardless of students' ability, motivation, or previous knowledge in dance *as long as the educators' pedagogical knowledge is leveraged in appropriate and systematic ways* (Warburton 2008, 11).

In his 2004 article in *Research in Dance Education*, "Knowing What It Takes: The Effect of Perceived Learner Advantages on Dance Teachers' Use of Critical Thinking Activities," he reviews "current ideas about what constitutes competent teaching and learning" in dance, specifically considering "the uses of

critical thinking in dance education" (Warburton 2004, 70). His study surveys a sampling of dance teachers working in private and public K-12 schools in New York City by having them fill out a Critical Thinking Belief Appraisal questionnaire. The study and questionnaire were designed to discover how dance teachers perceived the effectiveness of critical thinking-rich dance pedagogy for both high and low level students. For this study, high level meant high skill, prior knowledge, and motivation. Warburton worked under the assumption that critical thinking is significant for training dance artists with knowledge and skill needed to work in the field. He was interested if this belief was held and practiced equally amongst the high and low level student populations. This work is significant for my study because he refers to dance pedagogy rich in critical thinking opportunities, as including "discussion, self-discovery, creative improvisation, and fewer lectures and drill-and-practice exercises" (Warburton 2004, 70). Through my interviews with experts in the field of dance education and my own pedagogical experiences, I was able to examine how my three initial questions could be tactics for the kind of critical thinking activity that is unique to dance. Also, Warburton's scholarship affirms for me that critical thinking is a dancer's work. "The ability to think critically in, through and about the work from the stance of an audience member, critic, performer and maker, among others, is crucial to the development of knowledge and skill in dance" (Warburton 2004, 71). His study recommends dance pedagogy rich in critical thinking opportunities for all students, not just high

level students. A focus of my research was to seek strategies that connect thinking and dancing.

In her book, *Brain-Compatible Dance Education,* Anne Green Gilbert calls for a dance pedagogy that reflects current brain research and connects movement with cognitive development. Gilbert seeks to present a curriculum that partners skill acquisition with compositional and exploratory studies, prioritizing both technical and creative development. She claims that "using a conceptual approach in dance class, rather than rote, steps-only approach, creates a curriculum rich with novelty and meaning" (Gilbert 2006, 11). At Green Gilbert's Brain-Compatible Dance Education Teacher Training and the Dance Teachers Intensive at Cornish, all of the teachers advocated teaching from a conceptual perspective. The pedagogical strategy is such that within the studio dance class, all movement studies, exercises, and language are crafted around a concept, which has been identified as unique and relevant to learning in dance. Frequently the concept (an example, space) is chosen first, and then the movement scores, choreography, and improvisation, dialogue, and reflections align with the concept.

Gilbert also speaks to the significance of transfer of information and meanings gained from the technique class to other areas of life. "When class content connects to a student's life, both the brain and body gain and retain knowledge" (Gilbert 2006, 11). Her philosophy promotes a consistent transitioning between teacher-led and student-directed activities. This book offered both

practical strategies and theoretical support for this study's pedagogical method, assisting me to strategize ways in which dancing and thinking are interdependent. I was able to use several recommended studies when teaching at SEP and ShelterCare.

John Dewey (1859-1952) was a philosopher and educational reformer whose ideas and writings continue to influence educational theory and praxis today. In his 1938 book, *Experience and Education,* Dewey discusses two competing educational methodologies of his time, traditional and progressive schools. He clarifies the strengths and weaknesses of both, explaining how in isolation, neither is fully sufficient. Dewey argues that learning should be based upon the students' experiences, asserting that continuity and interaction are the "longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience" (Dewey 1938, 44). He explains that allowing students outward freedom, which helps facilitate and promote inward freedom of intelligence, is the way a teacher can "gain knowledge of the individuals [students] with whom he is concerned" (Dewey 1938, 62). Otherwise, an artificial uniformity can mask and inhibit exploration and individuality, thus blocking information that should pass from student to teacher. Ideally, the learning environment is co-constructed by everyone involved, which requires reflexive, active learning from the students and the teacher. Dewey also explains that reflection is a significant part of the learning process, calling "a union of observation and memory . . . the heart of reflection" (Dewey 1938, 64). Reflecting can guide students toward

applying what they have learned in school to other areas of their lives. Dewey's idea of how the teacher might best gain knowledge of her students provided me with information on how to design the study. When trying to decide how to evaluate the success of my qualitative, experiential study, in which I knew there would be no tangible results, I felt that if I gained knowledge of my students, meaning that if I saw them, heard them, and at times moved with them, then that could be an indicator that perhaps there was a flow of information between us and amongst the students as opposed to simply a flow of information from me to them. When designing my classes, I tried to implement studies in a way that allowed students to do, to watch, and then to talk. I presented material, they tried it on their own, and then they broke into groups and watched each other. If there was peer feedback, they would synthesize the feedback and then try again. Following the movement portion of the exercise, I asked the students to talk with each other about their experience through a strategy for discussion that I learned from Don Halquist and was reinforced at the orientation for SEP called Think-Pair-Share. Within this strategy, the teacher poses a question and asks the students to think about their answers independently. Next, they share answers with a partner and the last step is an open class discussion.

Janice Ross is an Associate Professor in the Drama Department at Stanford University. In her 2000 book *Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and the Beginning of Dance in American Education*, Ross explains how John Dewey's

ideas served Margaret H'Doubler as a foundation for her methodologies for dance pedagogy as she worked to secure dance's place in higher education (Ross 2000, 123). Ross explores both Dewey's and H'Doubler's philosophies and writings, specifically Dewey's *Art as Experience* and H'Doubler's *Dance: A Creative Art Experience,* which was written four years after. It is significant to note that neither had extensive first-hand experience with dance. H'Doubler did not have a dance background. She was teaching Physical Education in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Physical Education for Women when the head of the department asked her to look for a dance appropriate for teaching women at the university in order that she could present dance as a relevant and important component to women's physical education. Ross observes that the distance both H'Doubler and Dewey had from the artistic and presentational elements of the form, served them well in addressing aesthetic experience as an educational force with far-reaching potential. According to Ross, H'Doubler pursued a dance pedagogy that was egalitarian and democratic, with emphasis placed on process above product. She emphasized creativity and student-centered learning without prioritizing technical mastery. H'Doubler utilized structured investigations wherein students "came to understand themselves and their surroundings and to wonder at the world while making meanings through sensory information" (Ross 2000, 130). This suggests dance can and should encourage curiosity and deep

thought and supports the belief that experiences in the classroom can connect to our lives beyond the classroom.

The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training, is a collection of essays addressing current trends in dance technique pedagogy compiled by editors Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol. "The central assumption [of the book] is that the studio often acts as a conduit to dance/movement ideas, as well as being a place to ready the body for performance" (Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008, 3). In "A Dancing Dialectic," an essay by Melanie Bales, professor of Dance Department at The Ohio State University, she states ". . . [S]ince often the training [in the studio] is the medium through which movement ideas are born, transmitted, and transformed – movement can be identified as a conveyor of meaning and placed in relationship to other parts of the whole" (Bales 2000, 10). Her discussion of the studio as a training ground that is also value and theory-laden affirms the opportunity for meaning making in dance training.

Wendell Beavers currently serves as the Chair of Naropa University's MFA program in Theatre: Contemporary Performance. Naropa University is a private, nonprofit liberal arts institution located in Boulder, Colorado. According to the Contemporary Performance Department Vision webpage, their MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance Program, which started in 2004, "is developing a new paradigm integrating contemplative practice and interdisciplinary conservatory level performance training." Beavers's chapter in *The Body Eclectic,* "Re-locating

Technique," speaks to exploring abstract ideas with movement in a manner that links with embodiment. He claims dance creates a space where we can "practice transformation of animal-god states, merge environment and self, exchange self for environment, environment for self, become water, fire, air, matter, decompose, recompose, de-evolve, and evolve" (Beavers 2008, 126). The following passage on dance training aligns with the philosophical belief that dance pedagogy can lead us to engage our bodies to experience abstract concepts:

> Basically, the foundation for dance training should be physical investigation of the body as it is - our capacities and qualities, all possibilities of moving, emoting and creating forms in space and time. This possibility rests on techniques of sensing and perceiving. In this way one comes to understand and trust the process of being led by sensation and perception into nonconceptual worlds. This would allow students to fully give over to investigating space, time, visual form, and sensation, for example, while simultaneously recognizing and relating to emerging external forms (Beavers 2008, 132).

Clearly Beavers suggests that dance pedagogy in the studio dance class can allow students to investigate the physical capacities of their bodies, how they experience space and time, and abstract concepts through movement and while moving.

To more clearly understand the body as the site of lived experience in the studio dance class, it is useful to consider the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), a French philosopher working in the existential tradition, specifically phenomenology. In his most widely studied work, *Phenomenology of Perception,* first published in France in 1945, he addresses bodily lived experience or the phenomenology of the body. A major contribution from Merleau-Ponty is the

rethinking of consciousness: reconceptualizing movement, perception, and sensations to constitute our field of experience. Particularly noteworthy for dance's relation to the body and movement is, "I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 82). Our experiences in the world are inherently embodied. Merleau-Ponty departs from the dualistic perception prevalent in Cartesian philosophy that separates the mind from the body. Within this canon of philosophy, thought is framed as non-physical, thus situating the brain as the site of knowledge. Significant for this study is the passage in which Merleau-Ponty calls for "abandoning the body as an object, *partes extra partes*, and by going back to the body which I experience at this moment . . . , I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises toward the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 75). These insights provide support for a critical dance pedagogy in which teachers encourage students to approach their objectives in the classroom through an active engagement of the body, as intelligent, sensuous, and moving system. In terms of critical thinking in dance education, space is made here for learning via one's moving body as well as actively taking up both roles of subject and object of inquiry.

Another philosophical perspective related to bodily experience is found in Iris Young's (1949-2006) 2005 essay, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Space and Spatiality." Iris Young was a professor

in Political Science at the University of Chicago. Her work was largely focused in the field of political science, particularly on issues dealing with global justice. In addition, she is renowned for her writings relating social critique and feminist philosophy. In "Throwing Like a Girl," Young outlines "some of the basic modalities of feminine body comportment, manner of moving, and relation in space" (Young 2005, 30). Giving voice to, and then immediately challenging the notion that women generally do not "make use of the body's [full] spatial and lateral potentialities" (Young 2005, 32), Young provides context including a historical and cultural rationale. Specific differences in body comportment cited are length of stride relative to height and proximity of arms and legs to the body in terms of occupying physical space.

Within the studio dance class, how do teachers give students the opportunity to experience a variety of body comportments and ways to be in the space of the classroom? How can one diversify the movement explorations to better accomplish this? In Anne Green Gilbert's Brain-Compatible Dance Education Teacher Training, she warned participants not to allow their own movement preferences to override the class in a way that limits qualitative and spatial options for students. It is beneficial to teach class in a way that encourages students to discover their own movement signature, which is a term Gilbert uses to refer to a student's preferred movement style. This self-knowledge can allow for

more in depth exploration of how students' movement preferences transfer to other areas of life as well as help them refine their technical goals.

Max Van Manen, a professor of Research Methods, Pedagogy, and Curriculum Studies at the University of Alberta, wrote (1990) *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy.* In the chapter "Investigating Experience as We Live It," he discusses strategies for conducting phenomenological research including how to use experience as a starting point and how to collect data within this qualitative approach (Van Manen 1990, 53-55). To illustrate his points, he uses his own phenomenological descriptions concerning pedagogy and parenting. His approach is phenomenological in that the methodology strives to be descriptive. It is also hermeneutic in that interpretation follows the descriptions. This was useful for my research design, which was comprised of participating in a variety of pedagogical experiences, reporting on them, and then interpreting the experiences in theoretical and practical terms. Van Manen warns that when researching experiences, nothing should be taken for granted, but rather that the meaning is found in the experience. He stresses that when conducting phenomenological research, one must be very careful to examine both the experience itself as well as the language used to describe it. It is important to note his discussion of the interrelatedness of theory and pedagogy, when he writes "as we speak or write (produce text), we need to see that the textuality of our text is also a demonstration of the way we stand pedagogically in life" (Van Manen

1990, 138). This was significant for synthesizing insights from the master teachers with their pedagogy at the Dance Teachers Intensive and for understanding how this information extrapolated to my own pedagogical praxis.

Van Manen explains that data collecting within this methodology includes interviewing, eliciting written responses, and participant observation. Another significant point is that descriptions of experiences should not include explanations or interpretations and it is important to recognize that any description, whether verbal or written, can never be identical to the experience itself (Van Manen 1990, 54).

Nel Noddings, the Jacks Professor Emeriti of Child Education at Stanford University, is a leading figure in Educational Philosophy today. Her pedagogical background spans from elementary school to college level and much of her scholarship centers on the intersection of care and education, placing caring relations as the foundation for pedagogy. Her 2007 book *Philosophy of Education* introduces readers to the "branches and major topics of philosophy and how they are relevant to problems of education" (Noddings 2007, xiv). In the chapter "Feminism, Philosophy, and Education," she advocates limiting research claims to "local truth," which recognizes that outcomes "are accurate for particular groups under particular conditions for particular purposes" (Noddings 2007, 219). Limiting the scope of research claims is prevalent in feminist and postmodern research and was informative as I considered the possibility of transfer of

theoretical and practical pedagogical findings to other contexts. Speaking to the transfer of values from the classroom into other areas of life, Noddings explains, "an education worthy of the name must help students to examine their own lives and explore the great questions human beings have always asked" (Noddings 2007, 228). Moral education from the care perspective includes modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings 2007, 226). I am interested in these steps and their resonances in the studio dance class, where we can incorporate movement into each. Could using our bodies as an integral part of our caring practice, transfer to caring, physical action in areas outside of the classroom? In other words, can dance pedagogy serve as a vehicle for embodying care and also link with a physical outcome of *doing* something with the care? This idea established support for my preliminary question about experiencing abstract concepts through our bodies in motion.

The Community Performance Reader, a collection of essays about community art, performance, and community performance includes the chapter, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire (1921-1997), a Brazilian educator whose work centered on issues of empowerment and dialogue. Offering a pedagogical philosophy for oppressed peoples, he calls for a "humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed" (Friere 2007, 26). His pedagogy encourages students to take control of their learning and development. Within the

research design of this study, I strove to create opportunities for the students to make decisions inside of the classroom and encouraged them to express themselves with movement and verbal dialogue. Think-Pair-Share was one pedagogical strategy that I utilized when teaching in order to give them time to think independently, to speak with a peer, and then to share aloud in the group. It is important to note that inviting dialogue within a context that is unfamiliar for young students necessitates a high degree of care, nuanced listening, and time in order that they might disclose their movement and voice. In the chapter "Compositions: The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange," Jan Cohen-Cruz, professor at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, speaks of how Lerman's company integrates its work into that of the community in which they are working to blend their aesthetics with community participation. "She [Lerman] applied political organizing principles to dance – 'meet people on their own turf, affirm what they already know, bring them together'- as a way to build community" (Cohen-Cruz 2007, 244). Both Freire and Cohen-Cruz speak to meeting people where they are, honoring what they know, and engaging in consistent dialogue. These works easily intersect with Nel Nodding's theory of care and provided some value-based landmarks for navigating through the experience with both summer dance programs that I conducted in this study.

Review of Related Work

This section of the review presents another significant component within the initial phase of the study. This was the research that went into selecting the experiential components of the study's design.

During the summer of 2008, I attended Anne Green Gilbert's Summer Dance Institute for Teachers, a two-week course in Brain-Compatible Dance Teaching Methods. Gilbert is the director of the Creative Dance Center and Kaleidoscope Dance Company in Seattle and is recognized as a leading dance educator in the United States. She regularly presents at the National Dance Educators Organization's annual conference and has written many books and articles on dance in education. The Institute for Teachers presented her research and resultant pedagogical applications of the interconnectedness of dancing and learning. Participation in the Institute for Teachers guided me toward an interest in the unique ways learning takes place in dance and how it relates to values, philosophies, and best practices in dance pedagogy for teachers. A performance by the Kaleidoscope Dance Company closed the training. Bill Evans choreographed one of the works.

At the time, I knew very little about Evans but the following summer, when I learned that Cornish College of the Arts was hosting the Bill Evans Dance Teachers Intensive, a five-day workshop that offered a range of technique classes and conceptual tools for dance educators, I decided to attend. Prior to the Dance

Teachers Intensive, I read several articles written by and about Bill Evans, most notably his 1999 article "Teaching What I Want to Learn: A Lifetime of Dancing Lessons" in *Contact Quarterly* where he discusses his values and beliefs as they relate to teaching and learning dance. Evans cites the following passages as significant to his dancing and teaching practice. "First, 'dance is primarily an activity of the human spirit;' second, 'I teach what I want to learn;' third, 'technique is not working if it shows;' and fourth, 'everyone has the right to experience dance' " (Evans 1999, 43).

For the Dance Teachers Intensive, Evans partnered with Kitty Daniels, Chair of the Dance Department at Cornish College of the Arts, and Don Halquist, professor in the Education and Human Development Department and the Dance Department at the State University of New York, Brockport. Daniels is nationally known for teaching Ballet and Kinesiology. She worked clinically with dance kinesiologist Karen Clippinger and has presented workshops and published articles dealing with anatomically sound practices in dance training. Halquist holds a PhD in Language, Literacy, and Socio-cultural Studies. One of his areas of specialization is Early Childhood Development. I recognized that these three educators represented a wide range of expertise, relevant to my work in the University of Oregon Dance Department as well as to the two youth populations I was planning to work with for my research.

The teacher training offered a wide range of pedagogical experiences and was a great follow up to Anne Green Gilbert's Brain-Compatible Dance Education workshop I attended the previous summer. Each course at Cornish was also taught from a conceptual perspective and offered an in-depth study of Bartenieff Fundamentals. An explicit through-line in the workshop was the expectation for participants to regard the living body as our primary teacher and guide. High value was placed on anatomically sound teaching strategies, through which teachers strove to invite students to take an active role in their learning process. All three teachers presented their information within a larger framework of personal values, sharing how the information was relevant to their own practice. Similarly, they encouraged participants to consider how to best integrate the new information into our lives and work as teaching artists. We were constantly asked to contemplate how what we were learning intersected with our own practice, our beliefs, and our values in order to make meaning of the experience. This was done through discussion, improvisation, and collaborative work. Participating in the Dance Teachers Intensive was significant in that I was able to experience practical applications of certain best practices and values in dance pedagogy related to what I had previously read in the textual analysis.

Perhaps the most revealing and valuable component of the research was interviewing the master teachers. All three teachers allowed me to interview them regarding my research interests and they spoke generously on how these did or did

not intersect with their work. I asked them the three theoretical questions that resulted from my preliminary research. Their insights both challenged and focused my preliminary questions. They also provided practical strategies and language for addressing these in the classroom. Further detail and integration of themes with practical applications will be presented in the Chapter IV.

Identifying and planning the teaching component of the research design required a review of teaching opportunities available in my community of Eugene, Oregon. For the University of Oregon College of Education's Summer Enrichment Program, this included studying materials, applying, and interviewing to teach dance courses of my own design. For the Lane County non-profit organization ShelterCare, this included attending staff meetings to propose the dance class, working with site managers to learn about the consumers, coordinating site visits for meetings with the staff who regularly worked with the kids, and studying their materials to align the class work with the values and culture of the institution. The process of applying for SEP and proposing the class at ShelterCare was an important part of the review in terms of gaining further insight into the philosophies of the organizations, which were not immediately evident.

Post-Experiential Review: Responding to the Study

In reflecting on the experiential components of the research design, I identified critical thinking as a through-line underlying all parts of the study. I

began to think about my three initial questions as ways in which dance can offer a unique and full bodied version of critical thinking. Conversely, I was interested in how critical thinking, as a skill, can complement the study of dance. The post-experiential portion of the review acknowledges critical thinking as an emergent theme.

Doug Risner is one of the Editors-in-Chief for the *Journal of Dance Education*. He is also an Associate Professor of Dance at Wayne State University in Detroit. In a 2008 editorial in JODE, "Equity in Dance Education: Momentum for Change," Risner warns against the trend in college dance to move away from liberal arts courses toward an emphasis on studio arts classes. Reporting "a 30% increase in BFA programs with a 32% decrease of dance education degree programs" (Risner 2008, 76) in America since 2004, he explains that this shift reflects a problematic hierarchy placing the role of artist over educator within university dance departments.

Jan Van Dyke serves as the head of the Dance Department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she teaches courses such as technique, choreography, repertory, career management, and dance administration. In a 2009 editorial in JODE, "Redefining Excellence," she responds to Doug Risner's editorial, and echoes his message by calling for dance educators to consider the education they are providing. "No matter how excellently we dance, without a broadly based educational background, we are vulnerable and relatively powerless

outside the studio" (Van Dyke 2009, 4). At the heart of this statement lies the question, which continues to be relevant for dance educators, *what is in the reach of an education in dance?* Van Dyke's editorial is significant because like many others, she speaks of dance as a full and vital art form, one that requires an array of skills and intelligences. In her words, ". . . we need to stop thinking that the studio is enough" (Van Dyke 2009, 3). Like all disciplines, it is important that we continue to develop our language (verbal along with kinesthetic) in order that we can better communicate with ourselves and with others. This involves contextualizing our work in terms of historical, cultural, and personal relevance for the students and ourselves. I view Van Dyke's article as support that my project is both timely and relevant to the current academic and artistic discourse of our field. It is significant to note the first tenet of the UNCG Dance Department's Vision Statement from the department's website, "The Department of Dance will be a community committed to: engagement in creative and critical inquiry in dance as an arts practice and interdiscipline." This statement provides support for examining ways in which learning dance promotes critical thinking and establishes inquiry as a cornerstone for the dance educator.

Carey Andrzejewski's article, "Toward a Model of Holistic Dance Teacher Education," presents a model which identifies four tenets, essential to training dance teachers: "focus on the whole person, integrated curriculum, explicit identity development, and apprenticeships in relevant communities of practice"

(Andrzejewski 2009, 21). These tenets, particularly her discussion of dance teacher training as focusing "on whole person development—intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, creative, and spiritual development" (Andrzejewski 2009, 21), should inform how we address the complex needs and interests of all dance students, even those with no interest in teaching. "Students [training to be dance teachers] should engage in practice that is grounded in theory, and they should refine or develop theory based on their practice" (Andrzejewski 2009, 21). This assertion is pertinent to the teacher as she explores methods for inviting students into the multi-level, complex inquiry that is unique to learning dance. Linking theory and practice might be one way to present to students how dance knowledge can transfer between studio work and other areas of interest. Synthesizing theory and practice from the master teachers and applying to my own pedagogy was a significant challenge within my research.

Svetlana Nikitina is a Research Specialist with Project Zero, an educational research group at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. According to their website, their "mission is to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts, as well as humanistic and scientific disciplines, at the individual and institutional levels." In Nikitina's 2009 article "Movement Class as an Integrative Experience: Academic, Cognitive, and Social Effects" in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, she interviews Biology, Math, and Neuroscience students at Harvard who take Claire Mallardi's Movement for Actors and Directors

class. She looks for connections the students made between this course, their academic concentration, and other areas of their lives. Nikitina asks, "What were those connections that students made from their dance class experience to their academic and social development? And, what in the teaching and nature of the course supported this highly integrative experience that allowed students to reach beyond mastering an artistic medium and become better learners in general" (Nikitina 2009, 54)? This article conveys that dance, with its emphasis on movement and bodily intelligence, can offer a unique vantage for students to discover how they learn as well as demand a more complete perception of learning in which the whole self is engaged. Examining the transfer of information from the studio dance class to other areas and the objective of developing both artistry and critical thinking were most essential to my project in addition to reinforcing the importance of movement in deep, meaningful learning. I am specifically interested in Nikitina's observation about students' learning. "Attention to movement brought with it a realization in some students that body is an important source of information . . . . Perceptual acuity, access to body as 'the ultimate mode of thinking' " (Nikitina 2009, 57), is identified by students as a significant benefit of the class experience.

To try to understand why my classes at SEP were deemed by the administrators to be lacking by their very nature in higher order thinking or complex problem solving, it was important to investigate higher order thinking

itself in more general, non-dance specific terms. The Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program started in 1985, with a primary goal of decreasing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. The plan was developed to increase thinking and socialization skills and test scores without extra drill (repetition) or teaching to the test. "HOTS was also designed to work in the years after grade 3, when progress from earlier interventions dissipates, gaps rewiden, and disadvantaged students fall increasingly further behind. The program was eventually adopted on a large scale, in approximately 2,600 schools, serving approximately half a million disadvantaged students" (Pogrow 2005, 65). Stanley Pogrow, a professor of Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University and leader of the HOTS movement notes, "The approach HOTS took from the beginning was to generate a very creative and intensive conversational environment" (Pogrow 2005, 65).

Lauren Resnick is a professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science at the University of Pittsburgh. In her 1987 book *Education and Learning to Think*, written not long after the HOTS program was implemented, she provides characteristics of higher order thinking. These descriptors are general, and do not denote a particular academic discipline:

- Higher order thinking is *nonalgorithmic*. That is, the path of action is not fully specified in advance.
- Higher order thinking tends to be *complex*. The total path is not "visible" (mentally speaking) from any single vantage point.
- Higher order thinking often yields *multiple solutions*, each with costs and benefits, rather than unique solutions.

- Higher order thinking involves *nuanced judgment* and interpretation.
- Higher order thinking involves the application of *multiple criteria*, which sometimes conflict with one another.
- Higher order thinking often involves *uncertainty*. Not everything that bears on the task at hand is known.
- Higher order thinking involves *self-regulation* of the thinking process. We do not recognize higher order thinking in an individual when someone else "calls the plays" at every step.
- Higher order thinking involves *imposing meaning*, finding structure in apparent disorder.
- Higher order thinking is *effortful*. There is considerable mental work involved in the kinds of elaborations and judgments required (Resnick 1987, 3).

In a 2005 article, "HOTS Revisited: A Thinking Development Approach to Reducing the Learning Gap After Grade 3," Pogrow, essentially reviewing himself twenty years later, identifies the success of the HOTS program citing increases in test scores and transfer to other subjects. Further, the curriculum, built upon the belief that participating in consistent, meaningful conversation can guide students toward the "key cognitive processes that underlie all learning: 1) metacognition, i.e., the ability to think about, develop, and articulate problem-solving strategies; 2) inference from context; 3) decontextualization, i.e., generalizing ideas and information from one context to another; and 4) information synthesis" (Pogrow 2005, 66). These cognitive processes can serve as a foundational definition for higher order thinking.

Roger Benjamin is the President of The Council for Aid to Education (CAE) in New York City, where he serves as principal investigator and project co-director of CAE's Collegiate Learning Assessment project. In his 2008 article in

Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, "The Case for Comparative Institutional Assessment of Higher-Order Thinking Skills," he writes, "the higher-order thinking skills . . . thought to be particularly important in the knowledge economy, and shared by most educators as key aims of instruction [are]: critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving, and writing" (Benjamin 2008, 51). This more recent breakdown of categories within HOTS helped provide a framework within which to consider the cognition that I recognized in the studio dance class and more specifically, my three original questions and insights from the interviews with the master teachers. My study demonstrates what forms higher order thinking can take within the academic and artistic discipline of dance.

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom led a group of educational psychologists who developed a taxonomy of cognitive behavior. From low to high, the categories were knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Between 1995 and 2000, Lorin Anderson, a former student of Bloom and David Krathwohl, a partner in Bloom's original work on cognition, led a team to revise the cognitive domain. The new taxonomy within the cognitive domain is as follows, moving from lower to higher level thinking: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson and Krathwhol 200l, 30-31). For my research, it is significant that the highest level within the cognitive domain is creating. This supports the connection of high level thinking with creating, which is common practice in studio dance classes.

Currently, the terms higher order thinking and critical thinking are used somewhat interchangeably in practice and in the literature. And it is important to note that critical thinking and creative thinking have major points of intersection as well. *The Thinker's Guide to the Nature and Functions of Critical and Creative Thinking* examines both forms of inquiry across contexts and disciplines. This reader is written by Dr. Linda Elder, President of the Foundation for Critical Thinking and Dr. Richard Paul, the Director of Research of the Foundation for Critical Thinking. It discusses the distinct yet, interconnected domains of critical and creative thinking ". . . [E]ven in art, where creativity of the highest degree is essential, critical thinking plays a vital role . . . . But in art, as in every other domain of human achievement, criticality and creativity go hand-in-glove, mutually dependent, mutually interacting, mutually influencing each other" (Paul and Elder 2008, 28). This is particularly relevant for examining the work that goes on inside the studio dance class, a place where thinking and learning spring from the coupling of cognitive and sensory investigation. Clarifying the interdependence of the two domains is relevant because I learned first hand at SEP that critical and creative work are sometimes placed in a hierarchy that is inaccurate, does not fully represent either category, and ultimately may inhibit making connections between the two. Teasing out meanings here helped me to more clearly examine the multiple levels of work in the studio dance class.

Inquiry-based learning (IBL) is another educational methodology currently

being explored in universities across the country. IBL is built upon educational theories of several philosophers including American philosopher John Dewey's ideas on connecting learning with action to the Socratic method of teaching through asking questions, rather than telling answers. As is the case with higher order thinking, scholars and practitioners hold different definitions for inquiry-based education. One working definition proposed in an article from the *International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning,* called "An Exploration into Inquiry-Based Learning by a Multidisciplinary Group of Higher Education Faculty," describes inquiry-based learning (IBL) as a "learning environment focused on process in which asking questions, thinking critically, and solving problems are encouraged" (Friedman et al. 2010, 767).

In 2008, Mark Aulls and Bruce Shore co-authored *Inquiry in Education Volumes I and II.* In Volume I, *Inquiry in Education: The Conceptual Foundations for Research as a Curricular Imperative*, the authors combine expert opinion and writings on inquiry from different academic disciplines and traditions. "The goals of inquiry instruction are not only to acquire traditional knowledge but to learn how to think like an inquirer and how to go about theorizing, solving problems, searching, and transforming information so inquiry knowledge is useable" (Aulls and Shore 2008, 9). Inquiry in the studio dance class was central to this study. In dance technique, improvisation, and composition, the cornerstones of our work are inquiry, experimentation, and problem–solving. And perhaps even more exciting is

that these occur simultaneously on multiple levels – physiological, psychological, intellectual, and others. Within our discipline, these are not separated but rather, treated as part of a complete, full-bodied system of learning and working. Master teachers at Cornish, in their pedagogy and in the interviews, discussed evidence of inquiry and exploration in the studio dance class.

While inquiry is being advocated in K-12, I have been unable to find any writings or discussion for the studio dance class. Relevant to my research is how teachers can more explicitly introduce inquiry as a class norm within the studio dance class and continue to investigate the unique forms of learning that take place through dance. I also suggest that dance-specific inquiry, which involves movement and other aspects, is useful to dance educators and administrators in advocating for the value of dance in education. Within both works citing IBL in my review, it seems the conceptual framework is somewhat defined but that educators are working to discover best practices for implementing the instructional methodology within their discipline. I have some ideas and strategies, which will be elaborated in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

My research was serial in nature. Each component built upon and was informed by the previous. As with the review of literature, the methodology is divided into phases reflecting the complete research design.

Phase I: Research Design

The methodology for my qualitative study began with preliminary research, including textual analysis, aimed to discover points of intersection between selected writings taken from dance education, educational theory, and philosophy dealing with lived body experience. Engaging these texts through retroductive inference, "the originating of ideas, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from *other* concepts and theories" (Hanstein 1999, 78), I proposed three themes that emerged from the intersection of the texts and presented them as theoretical questions.

Phase II: Dance Teachers Intensive and Interviews

I attended a five day Dance Teachers Intensive with Bill Evans, Kitty Daniels, and Don Halquist at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, where I used

postpositivist methodologies "including but not limited to observation, participant observation, document analysis, and interviewing" (Green and Stinson 1999, 94). In addition to participating in the training, I read articles and watched videos on the master teachers.

Most notably, I conducted an interview with each of the master teachers at Cornish, regarding their pedagogical background, what they perceived as the most important beliefs related to dance pedagogy, and then asked them my three philosophical questions in order to see if and how they intersected with their work. See Appendix A for the list of interview questions. By participating in their training, reading their documents, and then interviewing them, I was able to explore the relationship between their practice and theory.

Phase III: Teaching

The third phase of the research design was creating a curriculum for and implementing two different summer dance programs for youth. The programs were informed by my preliminary research, participation in Anne Green Gilbert's Summer Dance Institute for Teachers, the Dance Teachers Intensive at Cornish and open interviews with Bill Evans, Kitty Daniels, and Don Halquist. I had the opportunity to experience first hand how the new information from these sources translated into practical applications for curriculum development and implementation in the two summer dance programs. See Appendix B for

background information on the Summer Enrichment Program and Appendix C for ShelterCare.

Phase IV: Post-Teaching

The final phase of the methodology examines critical thinking and inquiry unique to the studio dance class, which is discussed in Chapter IV Findings and Discussion. During this phase, I spent time synthesizing the master teachers' words and work as well as reflecting on my own classroom experience.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses practical pedagogical answers to my initial theoretical questions. Interwoven are experts' insights, experts' pedagogical strategies, pedagogical strategies I applied in my classes at SEP and ShelterCare, and finally, a discussion on how dance can contribute to critical thinking development, with examples of dance-specific critical thinking. This narrative is somewhat nebulous, reflecting my own non-linear learning process. Not all of my questions proved to be equally relevant or revealing and there were no magical one-to-one relationships where a certain pedagogical strategy perfectly transplanted into another scenario. All parts of the research design utilized synthesis, adaptation, decision-making, creating, and critical thinking.

How Does Dance Pedagogy Allow Students to Engage with the Functions and Processes of Their Bodies?

Expert Insight and Pedagogy: In responding to how dance can allow us to engage with the processes and functions of our bodies, Kitty Daniels, cited

"awareness" as the essential component. "It's about being able to listen for little whispers of information coming back in the body. To me it is a constant back and forth between the perceiving and the self-directing" (Daniels June 29, 2009). In Daniels's Anatomy-Based Ballet Class, she encouraged listening and perceiving during a movement study at the ballet *barre* by asking us to consider, from where do I choose to move at this point (June 28, 2009)? She instructed us to sense and notice within our bodies what was happening as we executed a certain movement. She presented ideas about what our objectives should be and then shifted the responsibility to us to use our bodies to figure out what to do with the information to ultimately meet our objectives. Her language revealed the belief that students must take ownership of their inquiry in the studio dance class.

What I tried in my teaching: Subsequently, within my classes at SEP, I tried to encourage students to engage their bodies, by asking questions (while they were moving and between repetitions) such as, What are you feeling here? What are you thinking about? What are you working on as you do this? The students, very few with previous dance training, had a variety of responses. Some would stop moving to think. Others would keep going and say nothing, but then respond later in their journal, and for others, there was no perceivable response so I didn't know their responses unless they joined in the discussion following the investigation.

I also explicitly asked the students on the first day of class to anticipate paying close attention to their bodies, that one of our goals would be to experience

what it is like to think, experiment, and problem solve while moving, i.e. in motion. Another way of framing this idea within a specific movement study was to ask them to track their experience, or actively notice themselves and their experience of moving within the given movement study.

Overlapping quote or pedagogical example from another expert: Pedagogical cuing from Bill Evans also related to engaging with oneself in movement. In his classes, Evans utilized what came across as a mantra; "there are many options" (June 28-July 2, 2009). I understood this to mean that there are many ways to address all movement challenges and very few set rules. Similar to Daniels, Evans stressed that it was inside the process of engaging with our living body (soma) that we find our answers. He iterated again and again that the value was in the "going inside" (June 28-July 2, 2009) of ourselves. And this was not just to solve problems but also where we go to discover what is alive, meaningful, and relevant for us as artists and human beings. Clearly, teachers can't do this work for the students. Students must actively participate in their own investigation.

Insights into dance-specific critical thinking: Cultivating awareness of how internal experience (sensation, feeling, impulse) interacts with decision-making and external cuing in dance is one way to explore a robust, full-bodied critical thinking in the studio dance classroom. Introducing this expectation of rigor on the first day of class gives students a chance to register the expectation for their engagement as well as to introduce the language and culture of the class. This seems relevant

(perhaps for different reasons) for those with, and without, previous dance experience. Something I had to come to terms with was that students might not understand what I meant right away. However, the strategy to explicitly introduce engaging with ourselves in motion, and then giving students time and space to experience this concept throughout the class helped keep them engaged and moving forward in their work.

An illustrative example from Kitty Daniels's interview was her observation, "I think there is a conceptual and perceptual dialogue that is at the heart of deep learning because you can understand fully what your pelvis is supposed to be doing but if you can't feel it, it is nowhere. And if you can feel things but you have no idea what you are supposed to be doing with that information . . ." (Daniels June 29, 2009). Her pedagogy, which calls for mutually exploring the conceptual and perceptual is one way that education in dance challenges traditional modes of learning to "reconceptualize cognition," thus validating "feeling, sensory concepts, and exquisitely varied forms of human representation that give us insight into what it means to be in, relate to, and comprehend" (Siegesmund 1998, 211- 212). The meaning I discern here is that dance, with its ties to movement, sensation, and cognition, might allow dance educators to bring the body and a more complete, expanded conception of *knowing* into our scholarly and artistic discourse.

Does Dance Pedagogy Allow Students to Experience Abstract Ideas Through Physical Action? If So, How? If Not, Why?

Expert Insight and Pedagogy: In responding to this question, both Evans and Halquist agreed that images are powerful tools for embodiment and "bringing the abstract into reality" (Halquist July 1, 2009). Evans specifically cited Rudolf Laban's Space Harmony work, explaining how in this work there "are abstract concepts (example platonic solids) that become very clearly physically embodied and we sense them on a physical level, the pull/counter pull and we visualize these different crystalline forms in this series of destinations through the kinesphere" (Evans July 1, 2009). During Evans's technique class, he asked us to "crystallize the shape" (Evans June 30, 2009) as a way to achieve clarity in movement. We responded to this external cue by creating the three dimensional shape and then used our sensory imagination to *crystallize* it, thus moving into it, through feeling and filling out the shape as an embodied inquiry. I understood Evans's pedagogy here to mean that he wanted us to use our creative and critical physicality, or dance thinking, not to simply replicate the shape he was after, but to simultaneously engage ourselves within it.

What I tried in my teaching: One of the abstract concepts I presented to students at ShelterCare was teamwork. For young students, with little or no exposure to dance, I chose this concept because of its easy extrapolations into

concrete examples in hopes that they would connect our work with their previous and future experiences. The class started with introducing this concept on the marker board and asking the kids to think of a time when they practiced (chose this word intentionally over "experienced") teamwork. We did a movement study, taken from Ann Green Gilbert's book *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* called Shape Fence where everyone stood in a line and made a shape and then the person on the end moved along the line to the end and added a complementary shape. The line kept moving and everyone got several tries. The idea was for students to look at each other and work together to get ideas from the other students in order to add their own movement to the tableau. The same day the class also learned movements and rhythms from the Guinean dance Cou-Cou. I asked the students to think about how the dancers and drummers were working together. The majority of the students said nothing, were very quiet, listening and looking around intently. Then I asked them to create a movement that expressed teamwork, to incorporate into what we had already learned about Cou-Cou. An older boy (who made sure to tell me at the beginning of class that he was only there for the drumming) volunteered a movement idea and proceeded to teach it to the rest of us. This was the most overt physical and verbal response from any student throughout all of the classes at ShelterCare. It is difficult to relay the spirit of the experience in narrative but during that class we were able to listen to, watch, and even teach each other. The young boy actively participated in the class, he taught the other students and

me his movement ideas, thus working in both follower and leadership roles. The other students were able to learn from their peer through the physical action of dance and movement. In other words, we moved beyond talking about the concept teamwork; we got to do it. Although it was a small step, I feel that through dance we were able to experience teamwork with our bodies in motion, i.e. through physical action.

Overlapping quote and pedagogical example from another expert: This question was met with curiosity from Evans, Halquist, and Daniels in the interviews. All three, in their own way, asked what I meant by the word abstract so I gave them examples of space and relationships. Through reflecting and analyzing within the research design, I now have a clearer, albeit open understanding of what I mean by the term. It is something we know exists but that is intangible, with fluid interpretations depending on the individual experiencing it and the context in which it is experienced. These are things that one can never fully know the way in which another person experiences them. They are hard to talk about and write about, but we can work within a loose, collective assumption, that allows us to roughly know what they are. All of the experts were inquisitive about how I came to be "interested in the notion of abstract" (Halquist July 1, 2009). In this question, I was most confronted with limitations of language, my own and the field's. What I was trying to capture was a dialogue on how dance and movement might give us the opportunity to think through and physicalize different ways of moving ourselves,

taking up space, and embodying particular ideas. This question, while admittedly vague and difficult to discuss, did reinforce for me the importance of investing rigorously in both the experiential and its verbal counterpart in dance. While I recognize that the verbal will never fully suffice for illuminating the experiential and kinesthetic, I believe one major component of the dance teacher's critical thinking work is cultivating verbal language and insisting the same of our students in the studio dance class.

Insights into dance-specific critical thinking: In presenting the task of experiencing abstract concepts though physical action, I was ultimately asking students to use their imaginations, while simultaneously revealing this process via movement. Some real challenges I found in both SEP and ShelterCare were that I had to figure out how to encourage students to accept the relatively high level of ambiguity, coupled with no pre-determined path toward success. This was challenging because the students preferred to work on specific tasks, "I like having something specific to work on and then persevere" (SEP student, Dance Technique Sampler, July 22, 2009). When working toward the goal of embodying abstract ideas, I found it helpful to contextualize the work for the students in terms of how the specific study related to dance training as a whole, why it was important or interesting for composition, how it connected to their interests and how it connected to other scenarios when they might have to think on their feet. This was a strategy Bill Evans shared in his technique class at the Dance Teachers Intensive.

It was important to inform the students that everyone would be on the edge of knowing. Using Kent De Spain's article "The Cutting Edge of Awareness: Reports from the Inside of Improvisation" as a point of departure, I shared with them that we were going to treat the class as a physical experiment by pushing *thinking* and *moving* as closely together as possible, perhaps even considering the terms as interchangeable (De Spain 2003, 27). Moving as thinking, and again, with the body and self (in as full a sense as we can imagine it) as our site of knowledge.

We also had to talk about what it feels like to be watched, as we are working and problem solving. I asked students to think about how we can recognize the self-consciousness, feel how it feels, and then move forward. Some of the students at SEP were open about their opinions here, saying they would just keep trying. This suggests an underlying confidence and sense of security that from my perspective was not present in the classes at ShelterCare.

In addition to utilizing imagery in cuing, strategies for facilitating this type of experience and incorporating critical thinking, took the form of asking questions like, what does swing feel like? What does swing look like? How does thinking of water as you move affect your dance? The challenge was to invite students to respond in movement without stopping to think. It was a physical, intellectual, and conceptual problem solving. We were working through ideas while moving and after, we would reflect and discuss in order to put verbal language to our understanding of thinking, feeling, and moving. This dance–specific form of

critical and creative engagement required a dynamic fluctuation between thinking about the objective(s), returning to what we were experiencing at the moment, and back again.

I identified a few specific pedagogical strategies of the master teachers to be particularly illustrative of the idea of experiencing abstract ideas through physical action. For example, Daniels shared that thought and intent shape outcome. Similarly, Evans emphasized that how we start a movement determines how we finish it. I found a commonality in both of these examples, that starting with thinking, more specifically, the unique kind of in-movement thinking (which includes sensing, intuiting, feeling) that we do at the moment of initiation directly correlates with the quality of our movement.

How Does Dance Pedagogy Allow Students to Draw Connections from the Classroom to Other Areas in Their Lives?

Expert insight and pedagogy: In their interviews and pedagogy at the Dance Teachers Intensive, Kitty Daniels, Don Halquist, and Bill Evans emphasized meaning making, i.e. asking students to consider what the given information means and how it is relevant for them, their work, and their life. Participants were asked to think about the information, to feel it, to synthesize it, to physicalize it, and then choose how to use it to meet their technical and artistic objectives. I identify

meaning making, as a skill, to be closely related to the transfer of knowledge and experience amongst different contexts. Evans's pedagogy evidenced this idea. During an exploration of the concept of the dynamic relationship between mobility stability, he asked us to focus on that relationship within the choreographed movement. He closed the study by asking us to reflect kinesthetically on mobility and stability, in a self-directed way, resembling an open-style *reverence*. After, he asked the class, what this information meant to us and we discussed our answers together (July 2, 2009).

In his interview, Don Halquist shared that helping students make meaning is a priority for him as an educator (Halquist July 1, 2009). On the first day of his Pedagogy Seminar, he asked participants to write down and then discuss with a partner what was personally meaningful, significant, troubling, or inspiring that we discovered during class that day. He then asked how or why that was relevant to our work as a teacher and artist. He prompted our discussions and free writes with big questions, questions that have many answers and were intended to allow us to think about our own process. Like Evans and Daniels, Halquist established the conceptual framework for all topics of discussion. He also shared practical strategies to invite our students forward to take an active role in their own development and to help us create a nurturing environment where our students are asked to learn and to feel challenge and growth. He taught us strategies for incorporating reflection and dialogue into our classroom. I especially appreciated

that he presented broad, overarching concepts and then directly related them to our work with Evans and Daniels earlier in the day. We got non-dance specific pedagogical instruction and then he helped us to weave in our subject from other work in the intensive. Thus, his Pedagogy Seminar seemed built upon the expectation for transfer.

What I tried in my teaching: Because the objective of meaning making was emphasized consistently and explicitly at the Dance Teachers Intensive, I tried to establish it as a class norm at ShelterCare and SEP. To help students to consider how our class work transferred to other areas of their life, I borrowed language from the Dance Teachers Intensive, asking them questions like, what does this mean for you? How is this information helpful? What does it remind you of? How will you use this later? Why do you care? Why don't you care? These questions served as writing prompts and when appropriate, I would use one or two while verbally cuing an improvisation score. I quickly discovered that students would take on broad, philosophical questions but I had to set them up with context. Starting with an open-ended question was usually not effective but they were able to transition from specific to general with relative ease. One example of this took place at SEP in the Improvisation and Composition class. I asked the students to think about choreographed movement and improvised movement. Then in their binders they responded to the following questions. Are both dance? Should one be introduced before the other? What is the relationship between the two? There was

a range of answers. One student said all dance was improvisation at one point. Another suggested that it was easier to have structure or choreography first and then improvisation. What stands out most was a student observation that improvisation is exploring yourself but choreography is just moving in the choreographer's way (SEP students, Composition and Improvisation July 13, 2009). Our process of meaning making was never linear but we were in a constant (at times, exhausting) volley between moving, talking, and watching each other. It felt important to dance with them, have them dance together, talk with them, listen as they talked with each other, and to constantly remind everyone that we were all learning. Information was moving in and out of all of us throughout the class. We were learning from each other and experiencing the collaborative nature of the studio dance class environment.

Overlapping quote and pedagogical example from another expert: In Anatomy-Based Ballet, Daniels said, "the job contract for a dancer is to make meaning" (June 30, 2009). She gave us specific, anatomical information on a given exercise and then shifted the responsibility to us as students for synthesizing the information and applying it directly and immediately to our movement. One example was addressing movement efficiency as it related to core support. She taught us the specific muscles that make up the core, talked about an approximate percentage of muscular effort needed for core support, but then said it was ultimately up to us as dancers to synthesize the information and decide (in terms of

core support), "What do I need to work more? And what do I need to work less" (Daniels, Anatomy-Based Ballet June 29, 2009)? Evans emphasized that meaning making required context, "without context there is no meaning. I can't just give you the visual, but I have to share with you the context in which it became meaningful to me and help you see how it is relevant to me as well as to you . . ." (Evans July 1, 2009). In the interview Don Halquist shared "one of the things I constantly am trying to negotiate is being relevant and by that I mean helping students make connections to their past experiences, their present, and the potential future experiences. So images that I use, the questions that I ask, are all kind of centered around helping people make connections to their prior experiences . . ." (Halquist July 1, 2009).

Insights into dance-specific critical thinking: Considering the implications for meaning making on the multiple levels necessary in dance (cognitive, sensory, intuitive, etc.) creates an opportunity for bringing together internal and external engagement. Meaning making is an example of critical thinking because it asks students to think about what they are going to do with the information and in dance, there is an immediacy of needing to synthesize the information and apply it to the work both conceptually and perceptually. Bill Evans spoke to the creative and critical nature of this work in his interview: "Part of the process through which one must learn is creative problem solving; playing with solving problems and using

the imagination to come up with unique solutions . . . to create problems. So that is part of the dance we do" (Evans July 1, 2009).

In regards to transfer and meaning making, perhaps the most valuable take home message that I gained from teaching at ShelterCare was the importance of asking students questions that connected our work in class (teamwork example) with other areas of their life, even if I felt certain they wouldn't physically or verbally respond. In other words, considering the ephemeral nature of the discovery moments in dance, we may not see immediate results from students or have any measurable insight into the students' process of understanding. Stanley Pogrow, leader of the HOTS program, speaks to this challenge in a manner that fully aligns with my experience with students at SEP, but more particularly those at ShelterCare:

> It is hard to communicate in print 1) how undeveloped disadvantaged students' initial ability to reflect upon and articulate their ideas and strategies for solving a problem can be, 2) how much patient work is needed to bring out their natural ability to discuss ideas and make generalizations, and 3) how counterintuitive it is for teachers to persevere in patiently questioning, month after month, while the majority of students still do not respond (Pogrow 2005, 71).

However, this strategy of best practices demands no less from the teacher. Every student deserves to be asked about her experiences, thoughts, and ideas. Every student needs time and space for his own meaning making. And to invite this level of engagement, teachers must allow for time, open and encouraging cuing, and the students need a baseline of feeling safe. The physicality and sensory investment in

dance make this especially true. The responsibility of asking students to merge ideas, knowledge, and action requires a heightened sensitivity and awareness by the teacher. This includes an open, yet gently adamant insistence that everyone's movement voice is invited and needed for effective learning by all.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INQUIRY

I am not the first person to identify critical thinking as relevant to dance education. But my work is part of a continuum centered on best practices in dance education. As a researcher, I was able to fluctuate between theory and practice, trying to understand insights from the experts and distilling these in a personal way through strategizing practical applications when teaching. The research study is unique in that it proposes conceptual frameworks and practical strategies for explicitly introducing dance-specific critical thinking in the studio dance class. In addition, it suggests ways in which critical thinking, as a skill is important in dance training.

I am invested in dance-specific critical thinking and the forms it can take in the studio dance classroom. While my research has not formulated *the way* that dance enhances critical thinking or *the way* critical thinking can complement dance training, the message is that when treated as a form of inquiry, dance can promote critical thinking and multiple levels of meaning making via a full bodied, curious, and rigorous engagement of ourselves in motion. If "the goals of inquiry are discovery, being inquisitive, being a problem finder and problem solver, being a

thinker, and doing what you can to create meaning on your own," (Aulls and Shore 2008, 23) then dance education is poised to lead the way toward more inclusive and integrated approaches to advanced thinking, perceiving, moving, thus expanding traditional conceptions of knowledge.

In summary, this study has provided me with new information to continue exploring. Moving forward in my career as a dance educator, I will be more explicit with my language in everything from course descriptions, to lesson plans, to in-class instruction, that practicing dance-specific critical thinking is a significant component of the studio dance class. I will continue to investigate what forms dance-specific critical thinking can take, partnered with a continual reexamination of how to best implement the strategies. Further, I am interested in how these might transfer to adult and advanced students in the studio dance class. There is also the big question of discerning and assessing student experience. What does dance specific-critical thinking look like? Change and growth, as well as complacency are challenging to evaluate in students. I see here a unique critical thinking opportunity for me as a studio dance class teacher: to cultivate tactics to more clearly *see* my students. Another potential direction of this study is to work with students to develop an adapted dance and movement equivalent to Bloom's taxonomy to implement as a class norm. While I do not believe that dance pedagogy should solely attempt to serve educational goals outside of its domain, I support experimenting with ways in which learning dance enhances critical

thinking. Similarly, exploring dance and movement-specific inquiry is a way we can grow our field and continue to effectively respond to and reflect back what is happening in our world.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opener: As a new teacher I am interested in the relationship between learning to dance and dancing to learn. I am asking three theoretical questions and seeing if/how they are addressed in this teacher training and how they play out for me as I teach in two new communities this summer. I am looking specifically at dance in the classroom.

As a master teacher, I understand your interests lie in teaching to the whole person – not separating personal growth from technical and artistic development.

1. If you had to choose one or two guiding philosophies or values that you carry into your many teaching experiences, what would they be?

2. Have these shifted throughout your career? If so, in what ways?

3. Do you find these philosophies/values vary greatly with different groups/scenarios?

4. In your experience, how does dance pedagogy allow students to engage with the functions and processes of their bodies?

5. In your experience, does dance pedagogy allow students to experience abstract concepts through physical action? If so, how? If not, why?

6. In your experience, how does dance pedagogy allow students to draw connections from the classroom to other areas in their life?

APPENDIX B

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) is one of the Youth Enrichment and Talented and Gifted Programs offered through University of Oregon's College of Education. Summer 2009 was SEP's 30th year. The program seeks to offer challenging and fun classes that serve as an extension of students' normal class work as well as an introduction to college level scholarship. Below is an excerpt from the SEP website detailing the structure and goals for the program.

> SEP is a two-week residential summer program providing challenging academic coursework and a wide range of social activities for gifted and highly able 6-10 grade students. Students are encouraged to largely construct their own academic and social schedules while at SEP, allowing them to cultivate their interests while simultaneously promoting their independence and self-assurance. Students must be working above grade level but do not have to have formal TAG identification to participate in SEP.
>
> During each two-week session, students live in university residence halls and attend six classes chosen from a slate of roughly 36 options. Classes are offered in a variety of subjects, traditionally including mathematics, science, social science, law, visual and performing arts, media studies, journalism, literature, ecology, and creative writing (course topics vary annually, ensuring that returning students will always have fresh options to chose from). Curriculum is designed to be challenging, with courses running from advanced early-high school to advanced early-college in difficulty level. There are no exams or homework and classes do not qualify for college credit; students are instead encouraged to let their interest (and their peers' interest) in the course material drive their learning.

APPENDIX C

SHELTERCARE SUMMER DANCE PROGRAM

ShelterCare is a Eugene-based non-profit organization that works with families who are homeless or at the risk of homelessness and adults who have a mental illness or brain injury. I taught a three-week summer Dance Program at ShelterCare, from August 10th until August 28th. ShelterCare is a non-profit organization in Oregon's Lane County. As advised by the ShelterCare counselors, class was held two days a week, on Wednesday and Friday, and lasted approximately one hour, from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

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